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To: mark.newman@phoenix.gov, racelle.escolar@phoenix.gov

Subject: Public Comment on Case No. Z-41-18, proposed condo tower at Phx Country Club

Dear Chairman Johnson and Members of the Phoenix Planning Commission:

Please allow my public comment on Case No. Z-41-18:

When high-rise projects slip free of central business districts they do damage to both areas: the central business district is diluted—deprived of that extra shot of vitality that the project would have provided, and the area where they do build suffers a suspension of progress.

For example, when tall buildings were first allowed along Central, outside the Downtown and Midtown designated high-rise areas, the neighborhoods from 3rd Avenue to 3rd Street went into nearly thirty years of suspended animation and hard times. Why? Because, when the first and second-generation homeowners in those neighborhoods died or aged out of their homes, they or their families kept ownership in hopes that their land, too, could soon have a high-rise on it. In short order, beautiful, owner-occupied streets became weedy rental neighborhoods. It took many years of political support, millions of dollars in public investment and individual efforts of restoration to return those neighborhoods to today's vitality. Even today, some homes too close to buildings that leer over their backyards have resale issues.

If you would like a more current example, consider Crystal Point, the high-rise condominiums on Osborn at 12 Street. Take a drive (or Google Earth street view) the neighborhood directly behind the tower and you will see what will sure be the last part of that great neighborhood to fully recover.

The effect may be different with the proposed tower at 7th and Thomas; it may largely be a commercial effect. Larry Lazarus, the attorney for the project at the Club, said that other corners of 7th & Thomas would be improved with at least a new restaurant if the tower is built. That may indeed happen, although no restaurateur will be able to afford to buy one of those corners—they will be renters in temporary buildings owned by people who, if the Club tower is approved, will waiting to put up high rise buildings on their corners, too; the "highest and best use" values will have shifted. That largely misplaced hope will stall normal progress on those corners for a decade or two, as no other towers will be coming for at least that long.

Finally, there is the issue of design. Indeed, the Club that long excluded people of other colors and religions now has a proper symbol of its history: a stark concrete wall, instead of any design that might be called urban or cosmopolitan. Can you imagine the people of Paris or San Francisco allowing the similar walling-off of a city block? It would not happen there, and it should not happen here.

Portland Place (by the same developers proposing the Club tower) is an example of how to do it right, by the way. Margaret Hance Park, the Japanese Friendship Garden and the Irish Cultural Center buffer the building from the historic residences to the north; apartment blocks are to the south. The condos are in an urban neighborhood rapidly becoming more pedestrian-oriented and are directly adjacent to a light rail station. Would the Club tower design work even at

oriented and are directly adjacent to a light rail station. Would the city then assign work over at that location? No—not if it proposed to wall-off the city. It would not have been approved by the City or by neighbors.

Very respectfully,

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